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ABSTRACT

One reaction to Title IX's basic requirement for equal opportunity for physical activity and sports, regardless of sex, was the widespread reevaluation of separate programs in physical education, intramurals, and athletics. To insure that all individuals would have equal opportunity in a given physical activity program, many administrators ordered that the separate programs for men and women initiate merger plans. The Iowa State University Physical Education Departments were merged in fall 1974 and the intramural programs in fall 1975. The merging of the two programs did not create a problem. Both programs had similar operating policies and eligibility rules, and administration of co-rec sports was handled and facilitated by both programs before the merger took place. The merger has had a positive effect and has led to an improved program in the following areas: centralized intramural office; better utilization of staff; expansion of sports offerings; one large group of participants rather than two smaller groups; equipment needs combined thereby avoiding duplication; coordination of space needs with other programs; combining of intramural meet activities to make more economical use of officials and other personnel; consistency in program policies and eligibility rules; and consolidated publicity efforts. (MM)

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MERGING MEN'S AND WOMEN'S INTRAMURAL SPORTS PROGRAMS

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National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association
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By

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Intramural-Recreational Sports. Title IX. Equal Opportunity. Affirmative Action. Merger. These preceding terms and phrases seem to be in vogue in the past two years, concerning physical education departments, intramural-recreational sports programs, and athletic programs. The recent women's rights movement has made its mark in the realm of physical activity. In many instances, the plight of women in physical education, sports, and athletics, left much to be desired. There really was no concrete reason for this which resulted in the now famous H.E.W. Title IX regulations.

The reactions to Title IX by physical education, intramural-recreational sports programs, and athletic programs varied widely across the country. College and university administrators did not really know what to do with this situation. In many instances, Title IX would result in increased spending for women's athletics and other sports and physical activity programs where opportunities for women were limited or not equal to men. As administrators began to look at physical education and sports programs for both men and women, they found separate programs for men and women in most instances. Physical education departments were present in pairs, one for each sex. As many intramural programs are administered through physical education departments, campuses which have separate departments for each sex have separate intramural programs.

One side effect Title IX has had in its basic requirement for equal opportunity for physical activity/sports irregardless of sex was widespread

re-evaluation of "separate" programs in physical education, intramurals, and athletics. To insure that all individuals would have equal opportunity in a given physical activity program, many administrators ordered separate programs for men and women to initiate merger plans which would result in a new program for both sexes with equalized opportunities for all. This has resulted in the merging of many physical education programs across the country. Intramural programs aligned with formerly split physical education departments have also merged. Many physical education classes are taught on a co-ed basis now which seems to be working out just fine for both sexes. Title IX, by the way, does not require the merging of separate programs, but does require "equal opportunity for both sexes."

Specifically, the merging of men's and women's intramural programs is a consideration which all directors of separate programs should investigate. The Iowa State University Physical Education Departments were merged in Fall, 1974, and the intramural programs merged in Fall, 1975. In our situation at Iowa State, the merging of the two intramural programs was not much of a problem. Both programs had similar operating policies and eligibility rules. Administration of co-rec sports were handled and facilitated by both programs before the merger took place. This cooperation by both programs led to the development of rapport and knowledge of both programs. In other words, we both knew what we were doing and basically it was done the same way.

The merging of the two intramural programs at Iowa State has had a positive effect and has led to an improved program in the following areas:

1. The "Intramural Office" is now located in one spot, which has reduced confusion concerning where to go to sign up for sports or to get information.

2. Better utilization of the intramural staff. Staff members have been united under one roof and administrative tasks can be divided up according to each person's expertise. The combined program has a larger staff which leads to a certain amount of specialization and an overall better product for the students. Example: One staff member works with all student personnel, which leads to equality of treatment, utilization of personnel to best meet the needs of the program.

3. Expansion of the intramural sports offerings available for both males and females. The separate programs for men and women, each included sports not offered by the other. The merger made these sports available by simply adding men's, women's, or co-rec divisions to the existing programs. This really aided Title IX goal of equal opportunity for all, irregardless of sex.

4. Secretarial support for the two separate programs combined. This allows for some specialization or division of duties such as taking entries, answering telephone, typing, keeping budgetary records, etc.

5. Facilitates best use of student personnel, both males and females. Student personnel for the merged program can be coordinated and students (regardless of sex) who have expertise in certain areas (officiating sports, supervising) are assigned to best meet program needs. This has resulted in expanded opportunities for women to officiate men's sports and vice versa.

6. Intramural participants (male and female) are combined to form one large block of participants. This increases status of the program within your intramural program's administrative reporting sequence. An example of this is at Iowa State University--instead of representing 65% of male students or 55% of female students, represent 65% of total student population.

7. Equipment needs. Separate programs require their own supply of equipment for respective sports. Careful planning in a merged program will make the best of the intramural equipment inventory.

8. Indoor facility and outdoor field space needs. Space needs need to be coordinated between the two intramural programs as well as other facilities/fields users (physical education and athletics). In the merged program, one intramural staff member would be in charge of all indoor and outdoor space needs and would interact with the other programs to insure optimal use of space by all programs.

9. Combining of meet-type intramural activities to make more economical use of student officials/personnel. Examples of this would be in swimming and track and field. The same set of officials and timers would work the combined men's/women's/co-rec meets. This would save money and facility/field time in administering the meets. Advance preparations for these meets would have to be made only once.

10. Consistency in intramural program policies and eligibility rules. Separate intramural programs might well have differences in their policies concerning participation or in eligibility rules (treatment of varsity athletes and P.E. majors). Merging the two separate programs under one

set of policies and eligibility rules would lead to more consistency in the overall intramural program offered to all students. It might be noted that separate policies might be used for the women's divisions if they were enacted to enhance participation by women or men.

11. Publicity efforts for intramurals on campus would be consolidated. Intramural handbooks for the separate programs separate preparation, printing and distribution each year. Combining the two handbooks would save hours of time in the entire process of preparing this publication. Publicity efforts in separate programs would again require the attention of two staff members and duplication in function. In a merged intramural program, one staff member would be responsible for publicity for the entire program.

This list is by no means inclusive and there are surely other benefits gained by merging intramural programs. If programs are to be merged, perhaps a discussion of how this is to take place might be appropriate. Obviously, the two intramural programs to be merged should be administered through a common reporting sequence. In other words, if one program reports to student affairs and the other to physical education, even further confusion would probably result.

If the two intramural program staffs would be hesitant about an abrupt merger, perhaps a one-year or two-year process might be appropriate. In this method, the co-rec sports might be an area that the two former IM staffs would collaborate on and then extend to the men's and women's divisions later. Policies and eligibility rules could be studied over this time and then combined. Student input in this process is a must. The

end result should be a program that any student, male or female, would want to participate in as this is the fundamental mission of the intramural program.